

## CREATING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE: AMIA PATHWAYS FELLOWSHIP

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) seeks \$249,400 in funding from the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program for an implementation project addressing IMLS Goals (1.2). The AMIA Pathways Fellowship (APF) supports paid internships in combination with mentorship and professional development training to forge pathways in the media preservation field for people from groups historically underrepresented in the profession. [APF is currently funded through an IMLS grant](#). This next phase of APF will build from this foundation to refine and expand the program, adding new tools and providing new types of scaffolding as these new professionals emerge into the field.

**Project Justification:** The APF was initially sparked by a National Film Preservation Board (NFPB)-funded study examining diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the moving image archives field. Qualitative and quantitative data revealed the chronic lack of cultural equity and inclusion in the profession. This lack of diversity has broad and persistent negative impacts on the communities that media archives serve and are part of, and on the collections mandates of both public and private archives and hinders the profession's ability to attract and retain talented new collaborators. The NFPB report to the Library of Congress recommended developing a field-wide paid internship program inclusive of trainees of different ages, levels of experience, and backgrounds, and supporting underrepresented individuals along their career pathways – recommendations that are addressed in AMIA's current Pathways Fellowship program, funded by IMLS. The program continues to be one of the only programs of its kind focused broadly on creating pathways into audiovisual archives for individuals from communities who have been historically marginalized from the profession.

Presently, we are just past the midway point for our first IMLS-funded [Pathways cohort](#). As a unique program, our continued commitment to its original purpose makes this an optimal time to maintain momentum moving into the next phase and avoid a funding gap. The next phase of the program will honor its initial ethos, which hoped to see the creation of a sustainable model that, in time, will provide scaffolding through which a more diverse and representative pool of audiovisual archivists are prepared to steward our collective media heritage. Because our fellowship cycle does not sync up with the IMLS funding period, there would not be programmatic overlap even though there would be administrative period overlap, and we could continue the program, and the original intention of building this scaffolding, without interruption.

**Project Work Plan:** The APF identifies a minimum of sixteen individuals, over two cohorts, from underrepresented groups and provides paid internships (30hrs/week for 10 weeks) to support them financially as they expand their field knowledge and fosters their career networks at a pivotal stage of professional development. At least half of these Fellows will intern in regional or community archives. APF supports the Fellows and the host sites through one-on-one mentorship, weekly webinars training encompassing core competencies, cohort-building activities, and the support of a larger network of specialists from the AMIA community. APF directly and positively impacts the Fellows and the host sites, creating working partnerships that will endure long beyond the term of this project.

To effectively carry out the program, the APF team consists of a Project Director (PD), Mentorship Program Coordinator (MPC), Curriculum Coordinator (CC), a five-member Advisory Board, adding an Alumni Coordinator (AC) role. The Board will guide the development of inclusive selection criteria for the Fellows and host sites. Prospective host sites must demonstrate a commitment to APF goals and prioritize interns' learning and professional advancement.

An early lesson we have learned from our first Pathways cohort is the need for expanded focus on the alumni mentorship component of the program to provide a robust scaffolding as fellows are entering the field. In time, we hope this will enable past cohorts to mentor the present one. To address this, we have added the Alumni Coordinator (AC) position to lead the development of an Alumni Program that includes all cohorts of the program. The program will provide continued professional development, connections to leaders in the field through a series of Office Hours, as well as an opportunity for peer-to-peer mentorship between cohorts.

Another early finding has been that while our intent was to offer all in-person internships, the ongoing pandemic made that impossible. The result - a mix of hybrid, remote, and in-person internships - would be an intentional part of the next

iteration. It allowed participation from fellows unable to find in-person internships due to disability or geographic concerns to participate fully in the program and share their experiences; directly supporting our mission of equity and diversity.

Having completed the internship portion of the current Fellowship, we have also found that the focus on community archives has its own challenges. Smaller community institutions do not necessarily have a full-time, trained, moving image archivist on staff to provide professional training for an intern. The new phase will address this directly by collaborating with Community Archiving Workshop and others to provide a mechanism that will allow us to provide an advisor to work with the institution and the intern, providing training where needed and applied skills guidance.

**Diversity Plan:** The 2019 NFPB DEI study that continues shaping this project examined a broad range of diversity factors. This work is driven by the crucially important goal of growing diversity at all levels of the media archiving profession and expanding the profession's impact to underserved communities, including BIPOC and people with disabilities. Our Advisory Board will guide our selection criteria for fellows, mentors, and instructors, ensuring we remain focused on our objective.

**Results and Impact:** The APF continues to boldly ask how emerging professionals can contribute to the work of established and non-traditional media collections, by providing early career support, a growing community, and opportunities for continuous learning— all while systematically addressing long-standing barriers to their entry and advancement.

Results from our first cohort are pending, but if invited to full proposal, we will have completed the first year of the fellowship and have program analysis, data, and reporting to share. However, we already have preliminary feedback on ways to strengthen the program, including greater awareness of how varied geography and different abilities create a different experience for all fellows. In the future, we hope to incorporate a “format kit” with sample analog audiovisual materials to send to fellows who have greater challenges accessing physical archives, so that hands-on learning will be accessible to all cohort members. We have also learned, through working with our internship partners, that host sites increased the salary they were planning to offer based on the higher standard the APF had set, demonstrating that this project has already had a positive impact on equitable pay in the audiovisual archives profession.

Feedback has also included an interest in modeling the Fellowship. The next phase of the project will be to expand our collaboration with other Fellowship projects - our current cohort has shared programming and activities with the Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship - and create a website with documentation and resources that can be used as a model for associations and institutions working to create transformation programs for the field through fellowships, internships, and mentorship.

Media collections exist in communities of all types, in all areas of the country, documenting their histories, aspirations, struggles and triumphs, frequently reflecting experiences typically left out of the dominant narrative. Community archives, in particular, are often small and understaffed and cannot support dedicated workers that have audiovisual specialized skills. The next phase of APF will build on the work already done in placing internships in community archives, expanding the opportunity for these small community archives to participate as an internship host by providing training and guidance through internship advisors.

**Budget:** More than half of the project budget (\$134K of \$249K), will go directly to interns in the form of wages, funding for conference attendance and professional development, and materials. Project staff costs are allocated for a PD, MC, CC, and AC (\$68K) and administrative manager (\$12K). Mentors/advisors for each intern will be eligible to receive a stipend (\$16K). Webinar instructors developing content aimed at building core competencies and speakers hosting virtual office hour sessions for both the fellowship and alumni portions of the program will also receive honoraria (\$12.8K). The remainder of the structural costs provide a stipend for an independent interviewer to conduct final interviews with fellows and mentors.